

Commentary on the Gospel for Mon, Jan 22nd 2018

Collect for Mass for Giving Thanks to God for the Gift of Human Life:

God our Creator,

we give thanks to you, who alone have the power to impart the breath of life as you form each of us in our mother's womb;

grant, we pray, that we, whom you have made stewards of creation, may remain faithful to this sacred trust and constant in safeguarding the dignity of every human life.

It's ironic that the first reading today exults, "Here we are, your bone and your flesh;" interestingly enough today is set aside as a special day of prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children. All of the Tribes of Israel are proud to proclaim this reality in words honoring David, the soon-to-be King of Israel.

Their pride rests in the goodness of God who blesses the Twelve Tribes with strong and faithful children. In many places in our world today there is no similar rejoicing in the "bone and flesh." There is hostility rather than joy about life in the womb. Let us make it our prayer today especially for to our loving God who is Lord of all life.

The gospel today is part of a rebuttal of the scribes' condemnation of Jesus: "He is possessed by Beelzebul, and he drives out demons by the prince of demons." Jesus calls them out for their lack of logic, "How can Satan drive out Satan? If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand."

This section of Mark's gospel deals with the opposition of the religious leadership in Jesus' time. That opposition finds frequent expression in the Gospel and becomes a theme moving us towards his cruel death. In these confrontations, Jesus is able to stave off the hostility of the scribes and Pharisees. But we know that ultimately Jesus' enemies only seem to win as we experience grief for the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus for us.

Lord, help us as we deal with the vexing conundrum of abortion in our world. We are grateful for your faithfulness and your invitation to grow as women and men of peace, justice and fidelity in a world that often confronts our faith. Keep us strong in coming to know you as the Lord of all life. As you confront the Scribes, be with us as we confront issues that seem to be overwhelming, but, in reality, effectively call forth our faith, hope and love. We pray in a special way today for pregnant women who joyfully nurture life in the womb and for their yet to be born children who ultimately emerge into our lovely but flawed world.

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